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(71) Applicant: **Dean, Alan Derek**
Orsett, Essex RM16 3JA (GB)

(72) Inventor: **Dean, Alan Derek**
Orsett, Essex RM16 3JA (GB)

(74) Representative: **Jehan, Robert et al**
Williams, Powell & Associates,
4 St Paul's Churchyard
London EC4M 8AY (GB)

(54) System for constructing electronic mail addresses

(57) A method of and system for generating a set of standardised electronic mail addresses, provide a personal name code indicative of the name of a person, a location code indicative of a known location of the person, generate an electronic mail address for said person based on the personal name code and the location code and provide a database of said electronic mail addresses for a plurality of persons at one or more locations. The preferred embodiment allows electronic mail addresses to be constructed and indexed so as to provide the easy location by a combination of some or all of family name, forenames, district, telephone area code, and for attachment of any amount of information relating to that address.

E-MAIL INDEX SEARCH RESULTS

Search Criterion	
Title	Mr.
First Name	A
Surname	Dean
Town/City	
Postal Code	
Telephone Area Code	01234
Telephone Number	123*
Search Results	
Index Details	
Mr. Alan D Dean Tall Trees Hergya Hyll Orsett, Essex RM16 3JA 01234 123456 alan.derek.dean.RM163JA.0@index.com alan.dean@freeuk.com	

Fig.2

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a system and method of creating a standardised set of electronic mail addresses.

[0002] The lack of an efficient and convenient system to locate an unknown electronic mail address is a major factor affecting the convenience and efficiency of electronic communication.

[0003] Electronic mail addresses can range from descriptive and easy to recall addresses that are based on a person's name or profession, to complex addresses that are difficult for people to remember or locate by simple rules.

[0004] No pattern or standard has been set for the structure of electronic mail addresses which would allow easy indexing and location by people wanting to find an individual's electronic mail address.

[0005] This is in marked contrast to the world's telephonic systems, where the number (address) is allocated centrally according to a national pattern. The referencing information attached to this telephone number is also collected in a uniform way. This standardisation allows indexing by district or name and address and can be made available to potential users of the telephonic system in a variety of convenient ways.

[0006] The present invention seeks to provide a standardised system for structuring electronic mail addresses so as to make them uniform.

[0007] According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of generating a set of standardised electronic mail addresses as specified in claim 1.

[0008] According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a system for generating a set of standardised electronic mail addresses as specified in claim 7.

[0009] In particular, for commercial, trade, service or professional requirements this allows the production of a directory of electronic mail addresses.

[0010] The location code could be, for example, a postal or area code, a telephone area code and so on. The personal name code preferably includes at least a person's family name.

[0011] The preferred embodiment allows electronic mail addresses to be constructed and indexed so as to provide the easy location by a combination of some or all of family name, forenames, district, telephone area code, and for attachment of any amount of information relating to that address.

[0012] To attain this goal, one or more structured addresses are created for each individual in a country, geographic region or state to which any number of subsidiary addresses can be attached, including existing electronic mail addresses. It is a simple matter for the system to be used to associate any of the structured electronic mail addresses with one or several other addresses to allow for routing of electronic mail messages to and from a designated master address.

[0013] The information that can be utilised for this purpose includes family name, forename(s), postal (zip) code (or country specific address locator code system) or portion thereof, as well as telephone area code (or region specific portion of telephone number). In rare instances, other identifiers may be required for purposes of uniqueness; however, these can be easily added automatically. The order must be a standardised format but it is irrelevant which format is originally chosen.

[0014] The preferred embodiment provides for the creation of a set of electronic mail addresses in standard format and which can enable a user to identify through simple logical analysis the electronic mail address of a known person residing at a known location, without needing to know that person's chosen electronic mail address. The system could also provide for a user to enter a person's name and location code, such as postal or telephone area code into the system, with the electronic mail address being identified by the system itself rather than by the user.

[0015] Thus, the preferred embodiment has the advantage of being able to offer a standard method of addressing electronic mail messages to persons for whom personal details are known but for whom an electronic mail address is not known. These addresses can be published nationally or locally or can be assumed depending on the amount of personal details that are known.

[0016] In one embodiment, the structured electronic mail addresses once created would be suitable to distribution on a CD-ROM/s with a simple software program to search for an individual's electronic mail address or addresses. The service could also be provided on line or in paper form.

[0017] An embodiment of the present invention is described below, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of an embodiment of search facility; and

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of an embodiment of results display.

[0018] The described embodiment is directed to the current form of electronic mail addresses but could equally be applied to other electronic or virtual addresses which could be developed in the future.

[0019] The preferred embodiment combines individual details into an index system to allow generation of structured electronic mail addresses and to allow easy searching of those details or a combination of those details to enable the location of individuals.

[0020] The individuals' details will be collected from generally available sources of information or entered from details submitted and an index of these individuals created from it, along with electronic mail addresses constructed from these details. The indexed information can be updated and added to by individuals who wish to have a more complete record of their personal details in the index.

[0021] All items of individual information will be added to the index where they are available but partial index entries will also be created, although electronic mail addresses may not be generated if the information is insufficient to do so. It is envisaged that the creation of the indexing system could be carried out automatically by accessing a database of physical addresses and associating one or more of the elements of the physical addresses or locations with the personal details of the person or persons at that location. The apparatus required to perform this operation will be readily apparent to the skilled person from the teachings of the general principles disclosed herein.

[0022] The major usage for the master index created will be as a real time search system that can function as a stand-alone computer based application, an on-line electronic service or in a printed form. It is envisaged that this master index and electronic mail address location system can be provided on-line such that users can access the information provided while using the Internet.

Index Creation

[0023] The details that are incorporated into the index system may include some or all of the following, but is not limited thereto:

Individual Name

Family Name

Forenames

Geographic Location

Locator 1

Locator 2

Locator 3

Locator 4

Postal Code (or Country specific address locator code system)

Telephone Number

Telephone Area Code (or Country specific address locator code system)

Non-unique indicator

[0024] The indexed information has the following attributes that feature in the above example index structure.

Individual's Name

[0025] The full name of the individual will be recorded including title, family or surname, forenames or initials as available.

Geographical Location

[0026] A country or region specific list of locations will be used to select the geographical details that are indexed. This list in turn will be used to facilitate searching of the index of individuals' details. The address information from the individual's details will be stored in three index items, 'locator 1', 'locator 2', 'locator 3' and 'locator 4'.

Postal Code (or Country specific address locator code system)

[0027] The postal code of the individual will be added to the index of individuals' details. All postal codes that are used in the process of generating the information index will be recorded in a form that will facilitate searching of the individuals' details index.

Telephone Number

[0028] The primary telephone number of the individual will be added to the index.

Telephone Area Code (or region specific portion of telephone number)

[0029] The telephone area code of the business will be added to the index of individuals' details. All telephone area codes that are used in the process of generating the information index will be recorded in a form that will facilitate searching of the individuals' details index.

Non-unique indicator

[0030] The majority of index entries will be unique due to the index construction, in the instance of an index entry not being unique an additional numeric indicator will be added to the index record.

The index format

[0031] An example of a master index record for an individual is as follows:

[0032] Individual's information as presented:

Alan D Dean
Tall Trees
Herga Hyll
Orsett
Essex
RM16 3JA

[0033] The individual's information would be entered into the index as follows:

Index Item	**Detail**
Individual Name	Mr. Alan D Dean
Geographical Location	
Locator 1	Orsett
Locator 2	Essex
Locator 3	
Locator 4	UK
Postal Code	RM16 3JA
Telephone Number	123456
Telephone Area Code	01234
Non-unique indicator	0

(continued)

Index Item	Detail
Generated *electronic mail addresses* (*where* ******* represents the electronic address there the structured electronic mail addresses would operate)	alan.d.dean.rm163ja@******* alan.dean.01234@*******

Searching the Index

[0034] Once created, the index can be searched either electronically or manually to locate an individual by using any one of the following criteria or combination of criteria:

Individual's Name *or part thereof*
Geographical Location
Postal Code
Telephone Number
Telephone Area Code

[0035] Matching one or more of these fields gives a user of the index a means of narrowing down a search rapidly to present the index entries that match their requirements.

Example of use of the Preferred Embodiment

[0036] A person wishing to locate the electronic mail address for an individual, can use the index to locate the information they need, for example:

[0037] A user wishes to locate the electronic mail address for an individual with a specified family name who resides in the geographical region known as Essex. Manually, the user may search the index to locate individuals listed as residing in Essex.

[0038] Alternatively, an electronic search tool could be offered to facilitate searching, which would have an appearance similar to Figure 1.

[0039] Following the input of one or more criteria a results screen would be displayed listing all individuals for whom matching information could be located in the index.

[0040] An example of how this information might be presented is given in Figure 2.

[0041] In summary, the preferred embodiment provides a system for correlating the details of individuals with a standardised method of communicating with those individuals via electronic means. This will enable users to locate individuals by personal details and physical location and then carry out communications electronically.

[0042] The disclosures in British patent application no. 0007224.9, from which this application claims priority, and in the abstract accompanying this application are incorporated herein by reference.

Claims

1. A method of generating a set of standardised electronic mail addresses, including providing a personal name code indicative of the name of a person, providing a location code indicative of a known location of the person, generating an electronic mail address for said person based on said personal name code and said location code, and providing a database of said electronic mail addresses for a plurality of persons at one or more locations.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the location code is a postal or area code, a telephone area code.

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the personal name code includes at least a person's family name.

4. A method according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein one or more structured addresses are created for each individual in a country, geographic region or state.

5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein one or more subsidiary addresses, including existing electronic addresses, are attachable to an individual's electronic mail address in the database.

6. A method according to any preceding claim, including the step of attaching a unique identifier to an individual's electronic mail address.

7. A system for generating a set of standardised electronic mail addresses, including means for providing a personal name code indicative of the name of a person, means for providing a location code indicative of a known location of the person, address generation means operable to generate an electronic mail address for said person based on said personal name code and said location code, and database creation means operable to provide a database of said electronic mail addresses for a plurality of persons at one or more locations.

8. A system according to claim 7, wherein the location code is a postal or area code, a telephone area code.

9. A system according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the personal name code includes at least a person's family name.

10. A system according to claim 7, 8 or 9, including means for creating one or more structured addresses for each individual in a country, geographic region or state.

11. A system according to any one of claims 7 to 10, including means for attaching one or more subsidiary addresses, including existing electronic addresses, to an individual's electronic mail address in the database.

12. A system according to any one of claims 7 to 11, including means for attaching a unique identifier to an individual's electronic mail address.

E-MAIL INDEX SEARCH TOOL

Title	Mr. ▼
First Name	A
Surname	Dean
Town/City	
Postal Code	RM16 ▼
Telephone Area Code	01234 ▼
Telephone Number	123
	SEARCH

Fig. 1

E-MAIL INDEX SEARCH RESULTS

Search Criterion	
Title	Mr.
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Surname	Dean
Town/City	
Postal Code	
Telephone Area Code	01234
Telephone Number	123*
Search Results	
Index Details	
Mr. Alan D Dean Tall Trees Hergya Hyll Orsett, Essex RM16 3JA 01234 123456 alan.derek.dean.RM163JA.0@index.com alan.dean@freeuk.com	

Fig.2

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(74) Representative: **Jehan, Robert et al**
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4 St Paul's Churchyard
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Telephone Number	123*
Search Results	
Index Details	
Mr. Alan D Dean Tall Trees Hergya Hyll Orsett, Essex RM16 3JA 01234 123456 alan.derek.dean.RM163JA.0@index.com alan.dean@freeuk.com	

Fig.2

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European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 30 2592

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	WO 99 40527 A (RODDA NICHOLAS ALAN ;A PTY LTD (AU); BENJAMIN DENNIS ANDREW (AU)) 12 August 1999 (1999-08-12) * abstract * * page 3, line 3 - page 5, line 14 * * page 7, line 12 - page 8, line 22 * * page 10, line 29 - page 12, line 14 *	1-12	G06F17/60
X	US 5 987 508 A (CROAK MARIAN ROGERS ET AL) 16 November 1999 (1999-11-16) * abstract * * column 1, line 39 - column 2, line 19 * * column 5, line 24 - column 6, line 5 * * figure 1 * * claims 1,2,8,9 *	1-12	
X	HILAL W B-E-D ET AL: "Designing large electronic mail systems" DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING SYSTEMS, 1988., 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SAN JOSE, CA, USA 13-17 JUNE 1988, WASHINGTON, DC, USA,IEEE COMPUT. SOC. PR, US, 13 June 1988 (1988-06-13), pages 402-409, XP010013111 ISBN: 0-8186-0865-X * abstract * * column 2, line 40 - column 3, line 4 * * column 4, line 15 - column 4, line 43 * * column 9, line 48 - column 11, line 65 * * column 14, line 33-41 *	1-12	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7) G06F

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE	20 December 2002	Denoual, M

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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A : technological background
O : non-written disclosure
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D : document cited in the application
L : document cited for other reasons

& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 30 2592

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	TIETZ W: "NAMEN UND ADRESSEN BEI ELECTRONIC MAIL IM KONTEXT MIT X.400 UND X.500" NTZ NACHRICHTENTECHNISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT, VDE VERLAG GMBH. BERLIN, DE, vol. 46, no. 7, 1 July 1993 (1993-07-01), pages 506-511, XP000378448 ISSN: 0027-707X * the whole document * ---	1-12	
X	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 018, no. 661 (E-1644), 14 December 1994 (1994-12-14) & JP 06 261069 A (FUJITSU LTD), 16 September 1994 (1994-09-16) * abstract * -----	1-12	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE	20 December 2002	Denoual, M

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E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date
D : document cited in the application
L : document cited for other reasons

& : member of the same patent family, corresponding document

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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO. EP 01 30 2592

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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20-12-2002

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82